



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
Monday, April 13, 2009



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District of Arizona

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## **EIGHT CHARGED IN SCHEME TO SMUGGLE SEMI-AUTOMATIC RIFLES TO MEXICO**

*One fugitive remains at large*

PHOENIX - A federal grand jury in Phoenix returned a 7-count superseding indictment on March 31, 2009, charging several individuals with conspiring together to transport semi-automatic weapons to Mexico. Based on an investigation headed by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, several are also charged with making false statements regarding purchases of firearms from federally licensed firearms dealers.

Charged in the indictment are: Aaron Loren Weeks, 23, of Mesa, Ariz.; Charles Michael Cartwright, 20, of Mesa; Ashley Virginia Boutchyard, 22, of Mesa; and Adam Wyatt Fuentes, 25, of Surprise, Ariz., with Conspiracy to Export Munitions, Conspiracy to Illegally Smuggle Goods from the United States, False Statements in Acquisition of Firearm, and Conspiracy to Make False Statements in Acquisition of Firearms; Saul Rodriguez, 24, of Mesa; Jesus Gutierrez, 46, of Avondale, Ariz.; and Olegario Gutierrez-Martinez, 30, of Mexico, with Conspiracy to Export Munitions, Conspiracy to Illegally Smuggle Goods from the United States, and Conspiracy to Make False Statements in Acquisition of Firearms; and Bobbi Jo Elizabeth Chalupa, 41, of Phoenix, with False Statements in Acquisition of Firearm.

The indictment alleges that Weeks, Cartwright, Fuentes, Boutchyard, Rodriguez, Gutierrez, and Gutierrez-Martinez conspired together to transport five AR-15-type, semiautomatic rifles to Mexico, and to make false statements in purchases of firearms from federally licensed firearms dealers, in violation of federal law. It further alleges that Cartwright, Fuentes, Chalupa, and Boutchyard purchased firearms, claiming that they were the true purchasers of those firearms, but in truth, they purchased those firearms with money from, and at the direction of another person.

Weeks, Cartwright, Fuentes and Chalupa appeared in federal court between October and December 2008 based on the original October 2008 indictment. All were released with conditions by the Court. Weeks and Cartwright are set for an arraignment on new charges on April 15, 2009. Based on the recent superseding indictment, several other arrests have been made. Boutchyard was arrested on April 3, 2009 and was released with certain conditions. Gutierrez was arrested April 7, 2009, and was released with certain conditions. Rodriguez was arrested on April 9, 2009 and is detained pending a detention hearing set for April 16, 2009 at 10:00 a.m.

Gutierrez-Martinez remains at large and is believed to have fled to Mexico. Anyone with info information on his whereabouts is asked to contact U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement at 1-866-DHS-2ICE (1-866-347-2423).

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A conviction for Conspiracy to Export Munitions carries a maximum penalty of 10 years in federal prison, a \$1,000,000 fine or both; Conspiracy to Illegally Smuggle Goods from the U.S. carries a maximum penalty of 10 years in federal prison, a \$1,000,000 fine or both; False Statements in Acquisition of Firearm carries a maximum penalty of five years, a \$250,000 fine or both; and Conspiracy to Make False Statements in Acquisition of Firearms carries a maximum penalty of five years, a \$250,000 fine or both. In determining an actual sentence, the judge will consult the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines, which provide appropriate sentencing ranges. The judge, however, is not bound by those guidelines in determining a sentence.

An indictment is simply the method by which a person is charged with criminal activity and raises no inference of guilt. An individual is presumed innocent until competent evidence is presented to a jury that establishes guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

This case is a result of Project Safe Neighborhoods, an illegal firearms enforcement program. The effectiveness of Project Safe Neighborhoods in the District of Arizona is based on the ability of federal, state, and local agencies to cooperate in a unified offensive led by U.S. Attorney Diane J. Humetewa. Through ongoing partnerships among federal, state, and local law enforcement and prosecutorial agencies, like the one in this case, U.S. Attorney Humetewa is implementing a series of strategies that are contoured to fit the specific firearms crime problems throughout Arizona.

The investigation preceding the indictment was conducted by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives and the Phoenix Police Department. The prosecution is being handled by Theresa Cole Rassas, Assistant U.S. Attorney, District of Arizona, Phoenix.

CASE NUMBER: CR-08-1197-PHX-MHM  
RELEASE NUMBER: 2009-130(Weeks et al)

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